

IN THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is

- 1   **1.**    A method of verifying a reticle, comprising the steps of:  
2               forming a conformal layer over a non-resist deposited layer that is formed on  
3               a uniform surface, the deposited layer including a reticle pattern; and  
4               inspecting the reticle pattern for defects.
- 1   **2.**    The method of claim 1, wherein:  
2               the conformal layer comprises a conductive material.
- 1   **3.**    The method of claim 2, wherein:  
2               the conformal layer comprises titanium.
- 1   **4.**    The method of claim 3, wherein:  
2               the conformal layer comprises a layer of titanium nitride formed over a layer  
3               of titanium.
- 1   **5.**    The method of claim 2, wherein:  
2               the reticle pattern in the deposited layer includes features having a minimum  
3               size L, and the conformal layer has a thickness of no more than  $1/2L$ .

- 1    **6.**    The method of claim 2, wherein:  
2                    the conformal layer has a thickness of no more than 1000Å.
- 1    **7.**    The method of claim 1, wherein:  
2                    the deposited layer comprises silicon oxide.
- 1    **8.**    The method of claim 7, wherein:  
2                    the deposited layer comprises a layer of undoped silicon dioxide formed on a  
3                    layer of phosphosilicate glass.
- 1    **9.**    The method of claim 1, wherein:  
2                    the thickness of the deposited layer is greater than 2500Å.
- 1    **10.**    The method of claim 1, wherein:  
2                    the thickness of the deposited layer is greater than 5000Å.
- 1    **11.**    The method of claim 1, wherein:  
2                    the uniform surface comprises a silicon substrate.

1   **12.**   A method of verifying a reticle, comprising the steps of:  
 2                   forming a conductive conformal layer greater than 100Å over a deposited  
 3           layer patterned with a reticle; and  
 4                   inspecting the pattern in the deposited layer.

1   **13.**   The method of claim 12, wherein:  
 2                   inspecting the pattern comprises automatically inspecting the pattern with  
 3           pattern inspection equipment.

1   **14.**   The method of claim 12, wherein:  
 2                   automatically inspecting the pattern includes automatically aligning a wafer in  
 3           the pattern inspection equipment with the pattern formed in the deposited layer.

1   **15.**   The method of claim 12, wherein:  
 2                   the pattern comprises a contact reticle pattern.

1   **16.**   The method of claim 12, further including:  
 2                   patterning the deposited layer with the reticle includes  
 3                   patterning a layer of resist formed over the deposited layer with the  
 4           reticle pattern,  
 5                   etching the deposited layer, and  
 6                   removing the resist.

1   **17.**   A method, comprising the steps of:  
 2                   forming at least one reticle patterned layer on a uniform surface; and  
 3                   increasing an inspection contrast between patterned and non-patterned  
 4           portions of the reticle patterned layer by forming a conformal layer over the reticle  
 5           patterned layer; and  
 6                   inspecting the reticle patterned layer.

1   **18.**   The method of claim 17, wherein:  
 2                   forming at least one reticle patterned layer on a uniform surface comprises  
 3           depositing a silicon oxide containing layer.

1   **19.**   The method of claim 17, wherein:  
 2                   forming the conformal layer comprises depositing a conductive conformal  
 3           layer.

1   **20.**   The method of claim 19, wherein:  
 2                   the conductive conformal layer comprises an interconnect adhering layer.